



The National Sporting Library NEWSLETTER

A RESEARCH CENTER FOR HORSE AND FIELD SPORTS

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SOJOURN: MELLON ART ON LOAN FROM YALE

by Lisa Campbell

Sojourn at Home: Sporting Paintings from the Paul Mellon Bequest to the Yale Center for British Art, a new exhibit at the National Sporting Library in Middleburg, opened to the public on October 7, as part of the Forrest E. Mars Sr. Exhibition Series. A gala opening reception was held October 4, for Chairman's Council members.

"This show captures the essence of British sporting art so loved by Mellon," said Walta Warren, NSL curator.

The exhibit will present 16 works by seven highly regarded sporting artists including John Ferneley Sr., John Frederick



Paul Mellon on Knight of the Galtees-North Cotswold by H. Raoul Mallais.

Herring Sr., Alfred J. Munnings, Henry Thomas Alken, Lionel Edwards, H. Raoul Mallais and James Dunthorne. The paintings will be displayed on the main floor of the

Library including the Paul Mellon foyer, the Founders' Room and the main reading room.

The Yale Center for British Art has generously loaned the works to the Library, many of which were once displayed in Mellon's private museum, the Brick House, near Upperville.

Paintings in the Library's show date from 1765 to the early 20th century. The most noble painting in the exhibit is *Study of a Saddled Bay Hunter* (1828) by John Ferneley Sr. (1782-1860). This beautiful portrait of a solid, sensible hunter once graced the main hall of the Brick House.

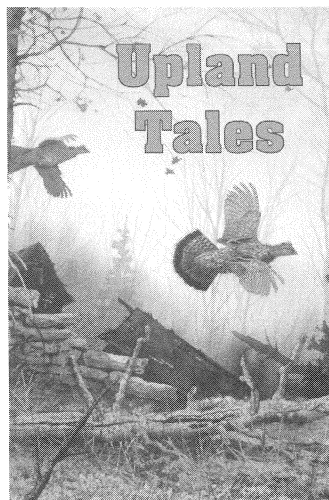
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McBean Grant Expands Shooting Collection

The National Sporting Library recently acquired over 50 contemporary books to enhance the shooting collection.

Earlier this year, the NSL received a generous grant for the Acquisitions Endowment Fund from the McBean Family Foundation of San Mateo, California. The donation is being utilized to enhance the smaller sections of the Library such as the shooting and angling collections.

As a first step, Librarian Robert Weber selected a few books based on suggestions by John H. Daniels, an



NSL director and sporting book collector who donated his entire 5,000-volume collection to the Library in the 1990s. For the shooting, Daniels recommended an expansion of the reference section including books on guns manufactured by Browning, Parker and Winchester. Also he suggested books written by noted authors of fiction and non-fiction shooting books such as Nash Buckingham and Havilah Babcock. Classic books on breeding and training gun dogs for upland game hunt-

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Mellon Art Exhibit

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The alert gelding reflects a kind eye yet appears fit and keen for the field. The beauty of the painting is its simplicity; the only subject is the bay horse, with a background of naples yellow. Warren chose the *Bay Hunter* for the exhibition's poster.

Ferneley painted numerous portraits of hunters and racehorses, and several hunt scurries. These large panoramic scurries depict the open English countryside with fences and gnarled trees and several members of the field at full gallop, some meeting mishap.

Two other oil paintings in the show by Ferneley are *Thomas Wilkinson, MFH, with the Hurworth Foxhounds* (1833) and an oil on canvas of Edward Horner Reynard grouse shooting with his brother and the game keeper, dated 1836.

Three fabulous paintings by Alfred J. Munnings (1878-1959) are in the show. Two are portraits commissioned by the Earl of Derby of his outstanding racehorses Hyperion and Fairway after they were retired to stud. Hyperion won the Derby, the St. Leger and the Prince of Wales Stakes at Ascot. He sired 118 stakes winners, and Mellon's Thoroughbred, Mill Reef, winner of the Epsom Derby, traces back to Hyperion. The third Munnings work on exhibit is *The Start* (1950), an active image of several racehorses with jockeys in colorful silks at the starting line.

President of the Royal Academy from 1944-1959, Munnings is best known for his paintings of country sports, especially foxhunting and horseracing. Over a 60-year period, he exhibited nearly 300 works at the R.A. Summer Exhibitions. The NSL holds a number of books on his work, including his three-volume autobiography.

Henry Thomas Alken (1785-1851) is represented in the exhibit with two



The Start by Alfred J. Munnings.

paintings, *Duck Shooting* and *Grouse Shooting*. Alken worked under the pseudonym "Ben Tally Ho" early in his career but later resumed his own name. He produced a number of sketches and paintings of racing, hunting, coaching and other country sports. He wrote *The Beauties and Defects in the Figure of a Horse* (1816), *The National Sports of Great Britain* (1821), plus numerous sketch books, many of which are in the NSL's rare book room.

John Frederick Herring Sr. (1795-1865) painted a series of four oils which show the four important stages of hound work. *The Suffolk Hunt-Going to Cover near Harringswell*, *Going Away*, *Full Cry*, and *The Death* are each approximately 11 x 15. The huntsman riding his gray hunter appears in all except the last where the gray looks on as the huntsman tries to pull aloft the fox out of the hounds' reach.

Herring, born in Surrey, began a career as a coachman at the age of 19 but after seven years, he devoted his time to painting a number of highly regarded works. His engravings were published in *The Annals of Sporting*, and in 1815 *The Doncaster Gazette* commissioned him to sketch the annual winner of the St. Leger stakes. (Thanks to the generosity of NSL Director Jacqueline B. Mars, the

Library has a rare folio-size copy of Herring's *Portraits of the Winner of the St. Leger Stakes...*, published in 1824.)

The oldest painting in the show is a humorous one of an unusual fox-hunting incident by James Dunthorne (1730-1815) and commissioned by John Sidey, master of the pack. In *John Sidey and His Hounds at a Farmhouse Near Hadleigh, Suffolk* (1765), a fox has leaped off the roof of a farmhouse and the hounds are boiling over the roof in hot pursuit. Sidey is astride a gray hunter with others nearby watching the scene unfold. A note signed by Sidey reads: "The occurrence represented in this picture really happened...."

A large and scenic oil by Lionel Edwards (1878-1966) depicts the green open English countryside with a foxhunt spread through it. The painting, *The Quorn running towards Quenby Hall* (1949), shows the hounds in full cry, having just made a left-hand turn on the line with the hunt staff and field following.

Edwards foxhunted with nearly every pack in England and was frequently commissioned to capture the hunts he followed on canvas. Early in his career, he studied with Arthur Stockdale Cope (1857-1940), at Heatherly School in London and with W. Frank Calderon's school in Kensington. In the NSL's collection,

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Mellon Art Exhibit

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Edwards's illustrations appear in 115 books.

The last painting is of Mellon himself, *Paul Mellon on Knight of Galtees-North Cotswold*. Mellon had commissioned H. Raoul Millais (1901-1999) to paint him on Makista, his beloved steeplechase mare.

"I wanted to be painted riding in a point-to-point on my successful mare Makista, but Millais turned up bearing a camera at the wrong point-to-point," writes Mellon in his autobiography *Reflections in a Silver Spoon* (1992). "Instead of Makista, I was mounted on Knight of the Galtees, a horse I had bought a year earlier from Liz Whitney."

Mellon hunted Knight then sent him to England with some of his other hunters. The horse handled himself well in the field so Mellon decided to try him in a point-to-point. Part way through the race, he realized that the horse was falling behind the pack. They finished 25 lengths behind the next horse and Knight was making a "terrible roaring noise." He never raced the horse again and gave him to a family as a children's hunter. Later he contacted trainer Jock Whitney and described the horse's sad performance. Mellon recalls Whitney's reply, "I don't wonder. I retired him because he had a shockingly bad heart." Mellon arranged to have the horse vetted and Knight was put down soon after.

Mellon didn't receive the painting until 40 years later when he hung it in his sporting library at Oak Spring, his residence with his wife Rachel "Bunny" Mellon. "It is a pretty good portrait of the horse," he writes. "But I've often wondered what would have happened if he had fallen dead on me."

Mellon, a 1929 graduate of Yale, conceived the Center for British Art,

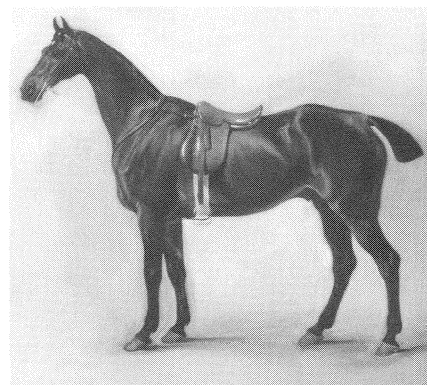


The Suffolk Hunt-Going to Cover near Harringswell by John Frederick Herring Sr.

an institution he built for the study of British art. According to the Yale committee established to set policy for it, the center was to be devoted to "British culture and society within the period 1625-1850, with the Paul Mellon Collection of British Art as the focal point." It opened in 1977 with holdings of over 300 paintings, 1,000 drawings and prints and 5,000 rare books donated by Mellon.

"My interest in British art is part of my fascination with British life and history," writes Mellon in *Reflections in a Silver Spoon*. "I grew to love English country life and country sports. All these interests converged to make me ready to collect paintings, drawings, books and prints, wherever the subject matter is related to English life in the 18th and early 19th centuries."

Judy Egerton, author of *British Sporting and Animal Paintings 1655-1867*, *The Paul Mellon Collection* (1978), aptly describes the genre: "British sporting art derives its character from the same source as that other British specialty, the open air portrait. Both reflect a taste for informality, an idealization of leisure and a love of country life."



Study of a Saddled Bay Hunter by John Ferneley Sr.

Shooting Collection Expanded

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ing complete the initial acquisition.

A sample of the newly acquired books includes *The Complete Guide to Bird Dog Training* by John R. Falk (1986), *Grouse and Woodcock: A Gunner's Guide* by Don I. Johnson (1995), *Upland Tales* by Worth Mathewson (2000), and *The Ducks Unlimited Guide to Shotgunning* by Don Zutz (2000).

The new books are on display in the main reading room and are listed in the NSL's online catalog at www.nsl.org.

Daniels Donate Original Illustrations

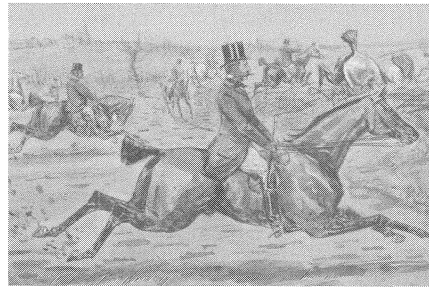
NSL Director John H. Daniels and Martha Daniels have donated 25 original artworks which illustrate rare sporting books in the National Sporting Library's collection.

The artists include Henry Alken (1785-1851), Paul Brown (1893-1958), Finch Mason (1850-1915), Gordon Ross (1880-1955) and Edith O.E. Somerville (1858-1949). The Daniels collected these unique works as part of their sporting book collection, and most are illustrations for sporting books previously donated to the NSL by the Daniels.

The drawings by Paul Brown are three framed illustrations for J. Stanley Reeve's *Foxhunting Formalities* (New York: The Derrydale Press, 1930), Reeve's textbook on foxhunting etiquette and traditions. Brown used brushes and India ink to create the hunting scenes, then framed the drawings with impeccable French lines.

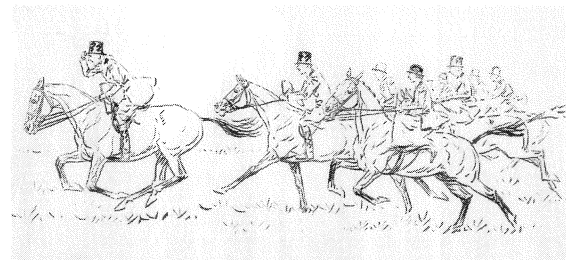
Artwork by Gordon Ross consists of two watercolor paintings for *Academy for Grown Horsemen* by Geoffrey Gambado (London: W. Dickenson, 1787). The illustrations depict this hilarious tongue-in-cheek manual which gives insight into 18th-century humor and pranks in the guise of advice for day-to-day riders.

Five additional Ross drawings illustrate George Henry Boker's poem *Legend of the Hounds* (New York: William Edwin Rudge, 1929). The poem depicts early American



Portrait of English sporting author G.J. Whyte-Melville by Finch Mason.

foxhunting and a brave bitch hound named Flora. Boker, who lived in Philadelphia, wrote the poem in 1867. A friend, who was editor of *Atlantic Monthly*, wanted to publish it in the magazine, but Boker declined.



by Paul Brown for *Foxhunting Formalities*

Similar in style for the Boker book, six original Ross drawings illustrate *Rural Sports* by John Gay (London: Bunny and Gold, 1801 and 1802). The author writes in prose and poetry to describe foxhunting, hounds and country life.

Finch Mason's watercolor painting is a humorous portrait of author G. J. Whyte-Melville in the hunting

field. Mason was a caricaturist and book illustrator. In this painting, Whyte-Melville rides calmly with a cigar in his mouth as he approaches an ominous hedge over which several other riders have come to grief.

The donation includes four colored aquatints "The First Steeplechase on Record: Nacton Church and Village" by Henry Alken. In 1839, Alken illustrated the episode for *The Sporting Review* which shows the 7th Hussars racing through the night over fences and through the town in their night shirts and caps.

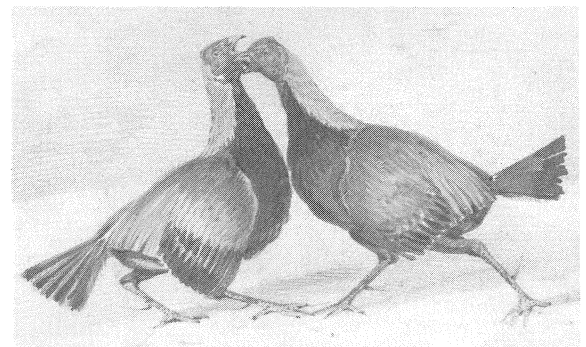
Another Alken set includes four watercolor paintings of a cockfight. Alken made these preliminary sketches for his book *National Sports of Great Britain* (London: Thomas McLean, 1823). In *National Sports*, he gives an overview of country sports including foxhunting, stag hunting, horse-racing, coursing, shooting, fly-fishing, prize fighting, cockfighting and more.

Edith Somerville painted "An Irish Trout Stream" and in 1929 presented it to Eugene Connett, publisher of The Derrydale Press. It hung in his Manhattan office until his death in 1969. Somerville is best known as the author and illustrator of many fiction and non-fiction sporting books in collaboration with Martin Ross.



by Gordon Ross for *Rural Sports*

by Henry Thomas Alken for *National Sports of Great Britain*





Directors of The National Sporting Library

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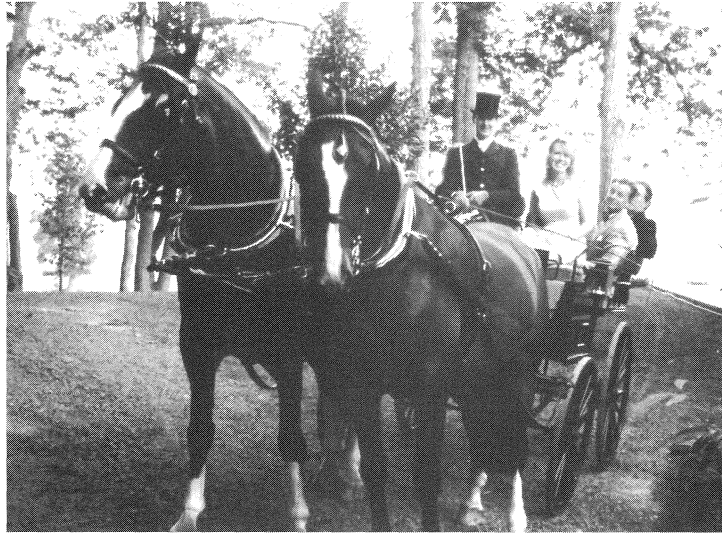
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Chairman's Council Honored at Berrywick



James Houston drives Dolly & Hannah owned by Patricia Thomas (right of Houston).

On September 5, members of the National Sporting Library's Chairman's Council enjoyed an evening at Berrywick, the new home of NSL Chairman and Mrs. George L. Ohrstrom Jr. The Ohrstroms offered carriage rides for their 80

guests and then dinner on the front lawn overlooking their magnificent estate near The Plains, Virginia.

The Ohrstroms hosted the event to honor Chairman's Council members whose support is so vital to the Library.

Students Enjoy Exhibits

In September, Curator Walta Warren welcomed students from The Hill School to view "Sporting Silhouettes: The Paul Mellon Weather Vane Collection at the National Sporting Library" in the Forrest E. Mars Sr. Exhibit Hall. Their art teacher, Linda Conti-White, brought eight classes of sixth, seventh and eighth graders over a four-day period to see how weather vanes are constructed and to sketch their favorite.

Warren began the tradition with "Art Between Hard Covers" and "Inspired Anima-

tion: The Art of Wesley Dennis," and has guided groups of children, including members of the Middleburg-Orange County Pony Club, around the exhibits and stacks.



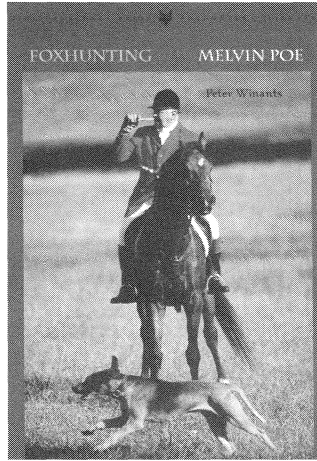
Foxhunting with Melvin Poe

Foxhunting with Melvin Poe. By Peter Winants. The Derrydale Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Md. 20706. 2002. 123pp. Photographs. \$50.00.

In the introduction to *Foxhunting with Melvin Poe*, author Peter Winants states: "[T]he pages that follow will describe the life and foxhunting philosophy of an extremely talented and charismatic man who invariably draws a crowd." Such a simple declaration of purpose belies the charm and eloquence with which Winants succeeds at his task.

While not a biography *per se*, Winants's work does relate important events and elements in Poe's life in order to explore and explain his foxhunting philosophy and the qualities that make him such a successful huntsman.

Particularly engrossing are the book's early chapters, which describe Poe's family and childhood, as well as the heritage of the area in



which he was born, raised, and has lived his entire life, save for his service in Europe during World War II. This sets the perfect tone and provides the necessary context for understanding what makes him such an extraordinary individual – "a member of a dying breed." With this background, the reader better appreciates Poe's uncanny success in the

hunting field and his particular manner in the kennel and at hound shows, described in later chapters.

In many instances, Winants draws on hours of interviews with Poe and his wife Peggy, allowing the huntsman to tell his own story and describe his own methods in the way only a natural storyteller can.

Used generously throughout the book is a splendid collection of color and black-and-white photographs that breathe even more life into Winants's prose and draw the reader into the enchanting world of Melvin Poe and Virginia foxhunting. Winants, a professional photographer early in his career, has made wonderful use of local collections, selecting images for their documentary potential as well as their artistic quality, the eight pages of hounds at the Orange County kennels being particularly remarkable.

—Robert Weber

Notes on the Thoroughbred

The National Sporting Library has withdrawn *Notes on the Thoroughbred from Kentucky Newspapers* (circa 1927), compiled by John L. O'Connor, from its annual duplicate book sale because of the difficulty of establishing an acceptable minimum bid.

The Library has two copies of the seven in existence. The other copies are held by University of Kentucky, Northern Kentucky University, Keeneland Association Library, University of Virginia and Iowa State University.

"To our knowledge, no copy of this book has ever been sold at auction before. One day a collector is going to support a lot of NSL programs through the purchase of this collector's item. But I am just not

comfortable establishing a minimum bid on it now," said Librarian Robert Weber.

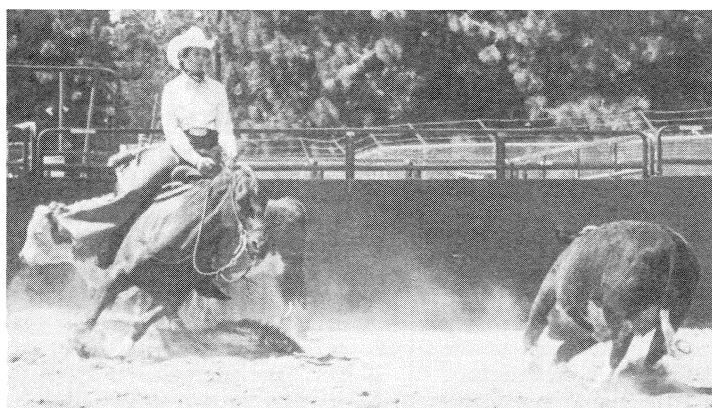
O'Connor was the first person to systematically research the foundations of Thoroughbreds in America. His work became the basis for the writings of Fairfax Harrison, who produced seven volumes on the history of the Thoroughbred. O'Connor, a Thoroughbred enthusiast from an early age, combed early Kentucky newspapers (1788-1833) for notes on racing and stallion advertisements for Thoroughbreds, as well as Quarter horses and Saddlebreds. The resulting *Notes on the Thoroughbred* was privately printed by Louis Lee Haggin.

Notes on the Thoroughbred does not have a publication date, nor are

the pages numbered. The story goes that the printer missed his completion deadline one too many times. An incensed Haggin picked up the pages while still in galley proof form and had them bound elsewhere.

The National Sporting Library's duplicate book sale is an annual fundraiser open to Library members. This year's sale features some of the most remarkable books ever offered by the Library, including Capt. Thomas Williamson's *Oriental Field Sports* (1807), Thomas H. Taunton's *Portraits of Celebrated Racehorses* (1887-88), Lionel Edwards's *The Wiles of the Fox* (1932), and Somerville & Ross's *Slippers' ABC of Fox Hunting* (1903).

Happy Birthday, King Ranch



Helen Groves was an avid competitor in national cutting horse events.

Dear Friends at the National Sporting Library,

Next year is King Ranch's 150th anniversary. We hope to establish a chair in ranching at Texas A & M, Kingsville. There is no such thing anywhere and how-to-do-everything-with-nothing ranchers are dying out. I guess ranching is part of field sports when you think it through. We want to see real stewardship of the land, including enjoyment, kept alive.

When I grew up, ranching was not only hard work with long hours, it was also great fun! Riding on roundups, cutting, roping, sleeping and eating outdoors and swimming in tanks or troughs was good. Meat killed in the a.m. was ready for lunch whether beef, deer, quail or turkey.

I'm off to see three of our horses run – God willing – at Delaware Park.

As ever,
Helen Groves

Helen Kleberg Groves has been a member of the NSL's Board of Directors since 1993. She is a descendant of Richard King who founded the King Ranch in the 1850s.

Rebecca Tomlinson Named Acting Director

Rebecca M. Tomlinson was named Acting Director of the National Sporting Library at a recent meeting of the Board of Directors. She will replace her husband, Kenneth Y. Tomlinson, who has taken a six-month leave of absence following his confirmation as Chairman of the Broadcasting Board of Governors which oversees U.S. international broadcasting including the new radio and television initiatives in the Middle East.



Rebecca M. Tomlinson

A former Capitol Hill aide, in 1995 she joined the Forbes for President campaign as an associate director. Following the end of the campaign in 1996 and her husband's retirement as editor-in-chief of *Reader's Digest*, the Tomlinsons moved to Middleburg.

Rebecca chaired the dedication of the new Library building for its grand opening in the fall of 1999.

Backer and Coles Elected to Board

On October 4, the National Sporting Library Board of Directors elected William M. Backer and John Coles as members.

Backer, of Smitten Farm in The Plains, Va., breeds and races Thoroughbreds, and hunts with Orange County. He has been quoted as saying: "Life would be wonderful if I could foxhunt half the year and go to horse sales the other half."

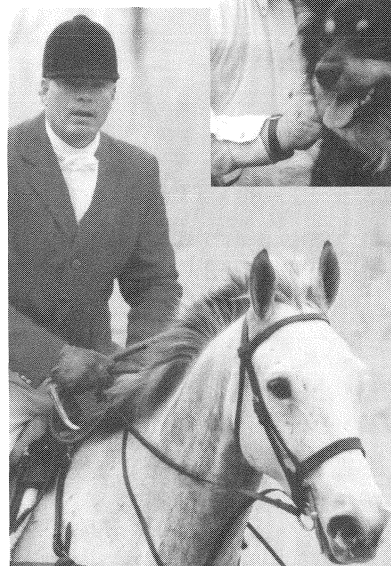
Backer was inducted into the Advertising Hall of Fame in 1996. He is the co-author of the song hit, "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" for Coca-Cola, among many others. He is president of the Piedmont Environmental Council Foundation.

Coles, also of The Plains, came to Middleburg in 1976 to train horses for the flat with EMO Stables. In 1978, Coles began riding and training steeplechase horses for George L. Ohrstrom Jr. and whipping-in to Melvin Poe, huntsman for Orange County Hunt. Coles is now Jt.-MFH of Orange County. Since 1990, he has been associated with Thomas and Talbot Real Estate. Coles is a member of the Piedmont Environmental Council.

William M. Backer and Frankie.



John Coles



Douglas Lees photo.

The Chairman's Council

These friends of the National Sporting Library have taken a leadership role in their support of the Library by joining the Chairman's Council:

Mr. and Mrs. William Abel Smith	Virginia B. Gunnell	Dr. and Mrs. Jerold J. Principato
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur W. Arundel	Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin H. Hardaway III	Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rathbun
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Mr. and Mrs. Ted Guarriello	Nicole H. Perry	John F. Zugschwert
Bill H. Gunn	Frederick H. Prince	

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday: 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday – Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Weekends by appointment



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